

system or the other could change this; but he argued that by the test of experience, the term of years system was the better of the two.

Mr. Ritchie had come to this Convention believing that the life tenure policy was the most efficient, but after a free interchange of views, and the most complete examination of the subject, he had arrived at the conclusion that it would be unwise to return to that system, and he had come here this morning prepared to vote for a less term even than was suggested. The question was, what would secure an independent judiciary. Gentlemen in favor of the life-tenure maintained that the elective system might render the incumbent liable to partisan influences; of this there could be no doubt; but this was not the only influence to which he would be subjected. Every officer, no matter how appointed, is liable, more or less, to outside influence. It is with the man himself, it is the moral manhood of the incumbent, be the tenure what it may, or the manner of appointment what it may. They had had instances, in the last few years, of judges, under the appointment system, who had, when the day of trial came, wilted like grass, and of judges, under the elective system, who had stood up in the defense of the right with a heroism beyond all praise.

As he had stated before, it was a matter beyond the control of any system; it depended on the incumbent himself. Of one thing there could be no question; the people of Maryland were opposed to this change, and if it was made, when in the lapse of years and the mutations of party, or other change of the organic law might be proposed, no feature would be more seized hold of or taken advantage of by demagogues and agitators than this life-tenure feature. In regard to the limitation beyond the age of seventy years, he was in favor of it, but would give to the Legislature the power to retain the services of the judge who was capable; but they were not dealing with exceptions, but with the rule, and he could not consent that any judge should be retained at the sacrifice of the good of the public.

Mr. Page replied to the remarks of Messrs. Archer and Farnandis, and maintained that they had failed to adduce any argument in support of the assertions made by them.